

SPECIAL SERVICES ADVISORY COMMITTEE MINUTES

May 19, 2011

Waukesha County DHHS – Brookfield Room

12:00 – 1:30 PM

Members Present: Nichole Hunkins, Patrick Jauquet, Teri O’Grady, Ann Shurte, Bonnie Siegel, Julie Turkoske

DHHS Liaisons Present: Don Daniels, Trisha Nepper, Vickie Smith

Visitors present: Terri Cook, Bruce Massman

Guest Presenter: Jim Hoegemeier, Executive Director, Arc-Wisconsin

Members Absent: Kristen Brost, Deb DeMaster, Kim Emmer, Kathy Evans, Dennis Farrell, Mary Jo Foye, Linda Fusco, Elsa Gonzales, Mary Ann Jensen, Tina Kasper, Pam Klintner, Missy Kueht-Becker, Sherry Perez, Tracey Stanislawski and Cheri Sylla

Agenda Item #1 - Introductions

Members introduced themselves and their role (parent or professional).

Agenda Item #2: Solicitation of agenda items/Approval of minutes

Ann Shurte made a motion to approve the minutes from the last meeting as written. Julie Turkoske seconded it. The minutes were approved.

Agenda Item #3: Education Segment - Jim Hoegemeier from Arc-Wisconsin

Mr. Hoegemeier introduced himself as a lobbyist and as a guardian for a number of adults around the state. He suggested to we not get “too caught up” in the political maneuvering that is going on in the State, as it will never end. At the same time, he added that there are a number of issues at this time that could have significant impact on individuals with disabilities and their families. Examples of that included changes to family care (e.g. caps on enrollment and suspension to Family Care expansion). Mr. Hoegemeier also expressed the opinion that the quality of case management that came with Family Care has, in his opinion, been inferior to what it had been when counties provided that service.

The original stated goal of Family Care was to eliminate waiting lists across the State. While it has been generally effective in that regard, a proposed cap on Family Care funding (at a level equivalent to what money is committed on 6/20/2011) will mean the reinstitution of waiting lists for adult services. The current system of families being able to refer their youth to the ADRC at 17 years/6 months and relying on adult services to begin shortly after that individual’s 18th birthday will change. Individuals that are on the Children’s Long Term Support (CLTS) Waiver at age 18 will be able to stay on the waiver until age 22. Going forward, movement on the waitlist will be by attrition only (i.e. a person moving out of county, dying or becoming ineligible). Arc has advocated that funding and services remain available, as needed, for individuals with special needs. Arc remains on guard that the funding cap could be lifted only to see a tightening of eligibility, thereby producing the same net result in a cut to services for people/families in need, and an extension in the economic and emotional toll on families. The proposed cap on Family Care expansion mean that more populated counties (Like Dane and Brown Counties)

which have not yet transitioned to Family Care will not receive funding. The concern is that Family Care could fail; at present, there is no alternative plan.

The introduction of “Third Party Administration” (TPA) is another concern for Arc. In the adult service system, TPA has resulted in several problems, including some providers not being paid for months. That has placed a tremendous strain on some of the smaller providers, resulting in some of them going out of business. (Nichole Hunkins shared an experience where UCP had to wait 6 months to get reimbursed \$20,000 from the TPA for respite services provided to adults in Waukesha County.) Whereas the previous system allowed the provider to call the county, and the county to “fix” the problem with relative ease, the current system is not as user friendly (at least as of now). Don Daniels stated that Waukesha County is scheduled to “go-live” with TPA for the CLTS Waiver on July 1, with WPS being our TPA administrator. Don added that WPS promises prompt payment as long as the service coordinator provides all documentation, in proper format, to preauthorize payment. Five pilot counties have been using TPA for expenses incurred through the CLTS Waiver. Those counties report that this process has increased service coordination time, despite claims that it would save time. The hope remains that it will save time in the future, once people have successfully navigated the learning curve. This change was mandated by the federal government, and has to be instituted statewide by the end of 2011. It is intended to provide a better system of checks and balances over the outlay of Medicaid dollars.

Another concern in the proposed biennial budget is related to major cuts to the Department of Public Instruction and the high costs of students in special education. The argument is they require a disproportionate percentage of costs. The group discussed their perception that legislators/policy makers don’t seem to understand that the high cost of maintaining these individuals in the public school system and at home is to be expected. It also makes the case that the failure to do so will result in higher costs in the future when they require institutional care. On a positive note Sandy Burns, retired DPI executive, will be joining the Arc Board of Directors and helping them develop advocacy strategies. On a positive note, Mr. Hoegemeier commented on the progress he has seen over time relative to children with disabilities being integrated into normal school routines.

Mr. Hoegemeier challenged the statement by government officials that Wisconsin doesn’t have the money to afford the expenses of caring for individuals with disabilities in the way that the current plan suggests. He contends that they do have the, but that they just “choose to spend it on other things.” The current proposed biennial budget is \$61 billion. Of that, \$29 billion is general tax revenue. \$17.3 billion is federal matching money; \$43 billion is state dollars. While the deficit is \$3.6 billion, it represents a relatively small percentage of the overall budget. Discussion ensued about “Pay now or pay later.” The group agreed that it is difficult to quantify that statement to prove our point.

Mr. Hoegemeier suggested that groups take on the task of helping educate new legislators – i.e. inviting them to meetings, to family’s homes or to school, to see first hand what is required to care for and educate our children.

Agenda Item #4: Birth-to-Three report:

Approximately a year ago, the Birth-to-Three parent advisory committee and the Family Support Program parent advisory committee merged, forming the Special Services Advisory Committee. Because neither Missy-Kueht-Becker nor Jesus-Mireles could be present at today’s meeting, Don was asked to inform the committee of the following items:

- **Crossing Borders Consortia**

The Federal government made ARRA funds available to Birth-to-Three. Most of that money was spent on new computers and to retain staff. Some money was pooled with Milwaukee and Ozaukee Counties to form a consortium. The goals, outcomes, contact information, lessons learned and ideas for sustainability are shown on the draft brochure the committee members were given. Major goals included group training of service coordinators around enhancing their skill-building mindset, where the parents are more involved rather than the program intervening directly with the child. They are trying to teach the parent to advocate for their child. They are trying to identify an assessment tool for infant mental health.

- **Funding Deficit**

In part because HMO's are not reimbursing LSS for allowable services, the Birth-to-Three program continues to operate at a deficit. The County continues to talk with the State about this issue, but to date it has not been resolved.

- **Bravado Challenge Fundraiser**

On Saturday, June 4, Birth-to-Three is sponsoring a fundraiser that includes a 3.5 mile hike/run, 8 mile bike ride, and 4 mile canoe/Kayak paddle. They are looking for participants, sponsors, volunteers, etc. A few information sheets were passed out.

- **New LSS Supervisor**

LSS has created a new supervisor position. That individual (Kate Wallenslager) is a current B-3 service coordinator. She will oversee six CLTS service coordinators that work with the CLTS waiver. In addition, she will oversee nine B-3 staff. Kate will begin functioning in this role within the next 1-2 weeks

Agenda Item 5: Changes to "Membership list"

Don stated statutory guidelines require that a minimum of 51 % of committee members be parents. Our membership list at present reflects 58% parents. County Staff are not considered committee members and have no voting privileges. Despite the 58% participation, we continue to struggle to get parents to attend these meeting.

Unscheduled Agenda Items :

Single point of Entry

Starting 6/1/2011, Jeff Kaus, the current Katie Beckett Consultant for Milwaukee and Waukesha Counties, will become Waukesha County's consultant through Compass Wisconsin/Threshold. This new program will provide a single point of entry for families to multiple programs (CLTS Waiver, Intensive In-Home Autism Treatment Services, Family Support Program, Katie Beckett and Community Options Program). Jeff will be determine eligibility for all of these programs for families that apply after June 6. He will take the call, do the intake, do the home visit, and make the eligibility determination. Waukesha and Kenosha Counties are the second group of pilot counties for Threshold. Racine and Walworth Counties were the first pilot and have been operating this way for the past year. Compass Wisconsin/Threshold pamphlets were given to the members.

Report from State Long Term Care Committee

Julie Turkoske reported that the Secretary of State is asking for ideas from families and providers regarding other ways to achieve cost savings. The Education system is experiencing cuts and state

funding is tenuous. They had listening sessions in February. The Children's Counsel suggested they have separate meetings for families with kids with disabilities. They held two sessions, by computer, but there was not a lot of participation.

One idea that came up was to let parents have debit card, instead of going through a T19 vendor, and to get equipment on line instead of getting it through T19 which costs more. They are trying to come up with ideas to cut costs without negatively affecting families.

Agenda Item 5: Agenda Items for next meeting

Ann Shurte will try to bring the new director of special education for the Waukesha Public Schools - to talk about "how schools support children with special needs."

Next Meeting: September 15, 2011.

Patrick Jauquet moved to adjourn the meeting. Julie seconded the motion. Meeting closed at 1:30.

Discussion with Jim Hoegemeier continued after the meeting closed. How do we NOT get depressed? We have to be creative, accept this as a challenge and look for new ways to accomplish the same goals, all the while trusting that the economic downturn will eventually turn around. Ann suggested that we work together from a position of common interest rather than from a position of protecting turf. Build relationships with your legislators.

Respectfully submitted,

Trisha Nepper, CSW